

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

verb tenses: forms of verbs showing the different times that events occur

main verb: most important verb in a verb phrase of two or more words

helping verb: a verb that combines with a main verb to form a tense

HERE'S HOW

Rule 1: Use the present tenses to convey action occurring now.

- The **simple present** tense places actions in the present.

EXAMPLE Bullet trains are common in Japan.

- The **present perfect** tense places the actions in a period of time leading up to the present.

EXAMPLE Subways have carried commuters to work for decades.

- The **present progressive** tense shows the actions in progress now.

EXAMPLE Traffic engineers are improving mass transportation.

Rule 2: Use past tenses to convey action completed in the past.

- The **simple past** tense shows action completed.

EXAMPLE In the 1850s, batteries powered some tram railways.

- The **past perfect** tense places an action before another past action.

EXAMPLE Until subways were built, workers had lived near jobs.

- The **past progressive** forms show actions in progress in the past.

EXAMPLE Officials were encouraging mass transit for years.

Rule 3: Use future tenses to convey action yet to come.

- The **simple future** tense shows actions that have not yet occurred.

EXAMPLE Eventually, people will need a new way to get to work.

- The **future perfect** tense places the actions before other future actions.

EXAMPLE By the time trains can no longer handle the flow of traffic, working from home will have become popular.

- The **future progressive** forms show actions continuing in the future.

EXAMPLE By that time, more people will be working at home.

Rule 4: In a narrative, switch tenses *only* to indicate a change of time. Use different tenses to make the sequence, or timing, of events clear.